

Canon U.S.A., Inc. Endorses the Independent WIR Certified Image Permanence Testing Program and Seal, Joining Epson, Hewlett-Packard, and Lexmark in Providing Consumers with Standardized Print Longevity Ratings

GRINNELL, Iowa -- (BUSINESS WIRE) -- April 8, 2005 ---- Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc. (WIR), an independent test methods development and product testing company, today announced that Canon U.S.A., Inc. will participate in the new WIR Certified Image Permanence Testing Program. With comprehensive test data provided by Wilhelm Imaging Research, Canon will begin using the WIR Certification Seal with a range of qualified photo printing products.

"In addition to our own photo imaging permanence scale, we are providing customers the ability to see independent image permanence results that allow an easy comparison of the available photographic materials by supporting the new Wilhelm Imaging test certification Seal," said Yukiaki Hashimoto, senior vice president and general manager of the Consumer Imaging Group at Canon U.S.A., Inc., a subsidiary of Canon Inc. "The new seal program provides an immediate, uniform test method to provide consumers with the information needed to understand the difference between various products used to print their digital photographs."

With more than 90-percent of the worldwide market, Canon, Epson, Hewlett-Packard and Lexmark are the world's leading manufacturers of inkjet printers, inks, and inkjet photo papers.

The WIR certification program has three components: (1) The WIR Certified Tests -- a comprehensive set of test methods developed by Wilhelm Imaging Research to evaluate image permanence; (2) WIR Test Data -- permanence data generated with the WIR Certified Tests; and (3) The WIR Seal -- signifies that the product has been tested by WIR, and that detailed image permanence data are available on the WIR website www.wilhelm-research.com.

"WIR's standardized image permanence test methods and specifications provide consumers throughout the world with 'apples-to-apples' comparisons for a wide range of inks and photo papers, much like the government-mandated fuel economy ratings relied upon by people shopping for a new car," said Henry Wilhelm, president of Wilhelm Imaging Research. "Imagine the chaos that would exist if every car manufacturer had its own proprietary test method for fuel economy claims for its vehicles. That is exactly the situation the photography industry has been facing without uniform permanence testing standards."

The display permanence ratings, album/dark storage permanence ratings, and ozone resistance ratings of the many inkjet ink and paper combinations offered to consumers vary over a wide range – from truly excellent to extremely poor. For example, most people do not know that, with a given printer, the choice of inkjet paper can have a tremendous influence on the permanence of the resulting print. Permanence ratings also differ greatly among brands of traditional silver-halide prints and dye-sub prints.

The WIR testing program helps consumers differentiate between printer manufacturers' papers that have been optimized for that company's inks, and third-party and store-label "universally compatible" papers that may use less demanding test methods or supply no image permanence information at all about this critical -- but initially hidden -- aspect of total product quality. Further benefiting consumers, WIR's stringent tests better encompass the wide range of lighting conditions that may be found where photographs are displayed in homes and offices.

Some third-party ink and paper manufacturers give display-life predictions for their papers based on tests that assume prints will be displayed under 120 lux UV-filtered illumination, instead of the higher standard of 450 lux glass-filtered illumination employed by WIR, and use a single density point for measuring fading compared with the two density points that WIR measures; taken together, these differences in test methods result in claims of display-life ratings that are between 4 to 15 times greater than those given by WIR.

For example, WIR gave one leading third-party inkjet paper a WIR Display Permanence Rating of 11 years when printed with an HP printer and the HP No. 57 inkjet cartridge. The paper's manufacturer rated the display life of the same paper at 162 years by using far less rigorous tests with 120 lux UV-filtered illumination and measurements made at only a single density point.

To qualify for use of the Seal, a product must have a minimum WIR Display Permanence Rating of 25 years and a WIR Album/Dark Storage Rating at least equal to the display rating. Complete results and details of WIR test methods are available at www.wilhelm-research.com. Updated information, including ratings for ozone resistance, resistance to high humidity during display and storage, and water resistance are posted on the WIR website as data become available.

"HP strongly supports the use of the new Wilhelm Imaging Research Certification Seal as an industry standard for image permanence," said Pradeep Jotwani, senior vice president, Imaging and Printing Supplies Organization of HP. "We've been impressed with WIR's commitment to stringent, credible permanence testing, and the seal will enable customers to make meaningful comparisons between products and brands, and will ultimately eliminate confusion."

"Photographs are among people's most valued possessions, but with so many differences in the photographic materials available, understanding how long they will last is complicated," said Greg McCoy, senior product manager, Professional Media and Supplies, Epson America, Inc. "WIR gives valuable, unbiased comparative print permanence data based on uniform, rigorous test criteria that photographers of all levels can use to make informed choices about the photographic materials with which they print their precious memories or stake their professional reputations."

At present no standards are available from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) or the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for testing the image permanence of digitally printed photographs. According to Wilhelm, "We have been an active member of ANSI and ISO standards committees for more than 25 years, and we

strongly support the development of uniform, global testing standards. When such standards become available, WIR will be among the first to apply them to product testing. But consumers need meaningful permanence data now, and the WIR Certified Testing Program and Seal are designed to meet that need.”

Photography has always been about preserving a moment, a special memory, or a loved one’s face in time, and people care very much about how long their valued photographs will last. Consumers want objective permanence information to help them decide which products to buy. When consumers see a WIR certification seal on a package or in an advertisement, they will be reassured in knowing that the product has been tested according to WIR’s rigorous test methods – and that detailed permanence data for the product are available at www.wilhelm-research.com.

About Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc.

Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc. www.wilhelm-research.com has for over 35 years conducted research on the stability and preservation of traditional and digitally printed color and black-and-white photographs and motion pictures. A major activity of WIR is the development of improved accelerated image permanence tests and advanced, full tonal scale, colorimetric analysis methods for the fading and staining that occurs with color and black-and-white photographic images over time. As an independent testing laboratory, WIR publishes brand name-specific, comparative permanence data for desktop and large-format inkjet printers and other digital printing devices. WIR has provided standardized test data to many of the world’s leading imaging and photographic companies, including Canon, Epson, Fuji, Hewlett-Packard, Lexmark, Ilford, Arches Paper Company, Premier Imaging Products, and others.

Wilhelm Imaging Research also provides consulting services to museums, archives, and commercial collections on sub-zero cold storage for the long-term preservation of still photographs and motion pictures.

President and co-founder of the company, Henry Wilhelm appears frequently as a speaker on inkjet printing technologies and print permanence at industry conferences, trade shows, and museum conservation meetings. His 744-page book, “The Permanence and Care of Color Photographs: Traditional and Digital Color Prints, Color Negatives, Slides, and Motion Pictures” is a standard reference in the field. The complete book, originally published in 1993, may be downloaded at no charge from www.wilhelm-research.com.

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